

2. Invest in the development and renovation of the state’s arts facilities.

There are more than 1,000 arts facilities in cities, towns, and rural communities across North Carolina. Abandoned textile mills, warehouses, banks, department stores, churches, and schools have been converted into arts centers, theaters, museums, and studios. Acclaimed architects Charles Gwathmey, Cesar Pelli, and Rafael Vinoly have designed new museums and theaters in Wilmington, Charlotte, and Durham. Communities have seen these arts facilities transform neglected city blocks and blighted neighborhoods, increase downtown property values, and become magnets that attract restaurants, galleries, and specialty shops to open nearby.

At least 20 new arts facilities are scheduled for completion within the next five years. For new facilities, we currently provide up-front funds for feasibility studies and design plans to attract funders and community support. However, over half of our existing arts facilities are in need of renovation or are in some phase of expansion. Though there is conflicting opinion as to whether or not the state should invest in non-state owned buildings, there is a critical need for funding for a wide range of facility issues - fixing leaky roofs, replacing aging HVAC systems, encouraging green building practices, making facilities more accessible to people with disabilities, and upgrading them technically or security-wise so that higher quality exhibits and performances can happen in more places in the state.

STRATEGIES

Develop an initial assessment of projected renovation and repair needs of the state’s arts facilities. Create a fund to provide grants of \$50,000 - \$150,000 for arts facility repairs and renovation. Provide information and consultants to ensure that buildings are accessible to people with disabilities. Promote energy efficiency and green practices for all projects.

Expand support for the planning and design of new arts facilities and renovation projects. Work with preservation organizations to identify resources to help with the conversion of historic buildings into arts facilities.

3. Shape the Grassroots Arts Program to meet growing community needs.

For more than 30 years the Grassroots Arts Program (GAP) has brought a steady supply of arts funding, based on a per capita formula, to every county in the state. The program has spawned the largest network of community arts councils in the country to distribute its funds. Arts councils ensure that the arts are an integral part of community life. They have become key players in community planning and economic development.

In addition to supporting programming and operations of local arts councils, Grassroots was designed to be the primary source of funding for local arts organizations including choral societies, artist guilds, and community theaters. In 30 years’ time, these organizations have proliferated across the state, especially in counties that have experienced significant population growth. Many receive operating support from their local arts councils, especially those in larger counties. However, many in smaller counties have had to develop without adequate financial support from their arts councils or Grassroots funds.

Population increases projected for North Carolina over the next four years will strain local arts organizations that strive to provide quality arts experiences to a diverse spectrum of citizens in these counties. Conversely, some rural counties will continue to experience slow growth and loss of jobs presenting a challenge to the creation and stabilization of arts councils.

Presently, 25 counties, most of which are in the East, lack the organization and resources to support an arts council. We’ve worked to create regional partnerships between established arts councils and their neighboring counties that need assistance. We’ve also funded a regional arts coordinator to provide technical assistance to counties in the East with excellent results.

STRATEGIES

Increase Grassroots Arts Program funding to \$6 million to meet the demands caused by population growth. Adjust the allocation formula to set aside up to 10 percent of the total to address inequities caused by the current per capita distribution formula, including funding for qualified arts organizations that lack access to operating funds.

Create Grassroots management toolkits, training and professional development workshops, and Webinars to help arts councils subgrant and administer GAP funds. Fund 2-3 regional coordinator positions to ensure that all 100 counties receive technical assistance needed to deliver quality programs to citizens.

Expand our regional approach to distributing Grassroots funds by designating 3-4 additional arts councils as Regional Arts Partners, and streamlining our distribution systems.